

## Exchange With Reporters While Viewing the Cherry Blossoms at the Tidal Basin

April 8, 1992

*The President.* Look, we're out here to enjoy the flowers, thank you very much. We don't discuss those kinds of things anyway.

Q. Good morning.

*Mrs. Bush.* Good morning.

*The President.* Good morning, everybody. Bright and early. Wait until the sun comes up.

Q. And then you'll tell us about that satellite and Arafat?

*The President.* The satellite.

Q. Are you going to buy our breakfast? I know a good bagel factory.

*The President.* Enjoy. Careful, careful, don't fall in.

Q. Don't fall down.

*The President.* This is beautiful. Isn't this beautiful? It's a little early. We're trying to avoid holding people up in the traffic.

Q. Did you see that Tsongas is back in the race?

*The President.* We're not commenting on the Democratic—all three of them are Democrats.

Q. What do you think about your latest—

*The President.* Outstanding. Excellent.

Q. Mr. President, you could see the colors better in the daytime.

*The President.* I know it, but you get—

Q. Brilliant.

*The President.* It will be daylight at 6:20 a.m., but we just wanted to get out here before we held up too much traffic. As I speak the sun is starting to rise somewhere.

Q. You think you're going to be running against Clinton?

*The President.* I don't know. I'm not going to comment on the Democratic side. I've got a good record of not doing that so far, and I'm going to stay with it.

Q. Well, he's the candidate for change.

*The President.* He's running against me. I'm not running against anybody right now. Let's see what they come up with.

Q. Is this your favorite monument?

*The President.* Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International].

Q. You got me up this morning; I've got to work. Last time I came here was 3 a.m. in the morning with Nixon.

Q. You see things have gotten better. You don't have to come out quite so early.

Q. Oh, yes. In '71.

*The President.* How did he do in the primary? [Laughter]

Q. It was a Vietnam protest.

### Term Limitations

*The President.* Helen, this might interest you. This might interest you all. Here's Thomas Jefferson's belief in term limitations.

Q. My favorite.

*The President.* This one. This is Jefferson's appeal for term limits. Read carefully, Helen.

Q. —not an advocate.

*The President.* "Frequent changes . . . laws and institutions must go hand-in-hand with the progress of the human mind. As that becomes more developed, more enlightened, as new discoveries are made, new truth discovered, and matters of opinions change . . . change is certain . . . institutions must advance also to keep pace with times." If I've ever heard an eloquent plea for term limits, that's it.

Q. Doesn't sound like that to me.

*The President.* It does to me. "We might as well require men to wear—[inaudible]"—in other words, things have to change. Congress must change.

Q. I don't think Bob Michel would like that.

*The President.* Well, I think he probably would. But I really think this is a very important statement here. Let's see what he says over here.

Q. You're misinterpreting Jefferson.

*The President.* No, I'm not.

Q. You ought to send this statement to Peru.

*The President.* Perot?

Q. Peru.

*The President.* Oh, sorry, I heard you.

*Q.* Perot, right? Is he on your mind?

*The President.* No, I think he's on yours.

*Q.* Not at all.

*The President.* This is a lovely memorial.

*Q.* Do you care one way or the other if Perot gets in it, Mr. President?

*The President.* No.

*Q.* Tell Strom Thurmond about it. How many terms has he had?

*Q.* Do you have a favorite memorial?

*Mrs. Bush.* This may well be it. It's a nice one.

*The President.* This one is?

*Q.* You can see this from your balcony.

#### *U.S. Supreme Court*

*Q.* Maybe he's talking about liberal interpretation of the Constitution vis-a-vis the U.S. Supreme Court and its need to interpret law in light of ever-changing circumstances?

*The President.* That's exactly what the Supreme Court does. They interpret the Constitution. They do not legislate from the Bench. One of the things I'm most proud of is my appointments to the Supreme Court. And it's a good court, and it does not legislate from the Bench as much as in the past. And that's good. And maybe that's what he's talking about. But I don't see that in that particular message there. What I think he's talking about there is change, and we are trying to get some change.

*Q.* What did you think of the march on Sunday?

*The President.* The march?

*Q.* Yes, the march.

*The President.* I think Jefferson would have approved of that. Everybody has a right to petition his Government, or her Government, Helen; his in the generic sense.

*Q.* But where does it fall on your ears?

*The President.* Everybody has that right.

#### *President's Schedule*

*Q.* Mr. President, we've noticed that you've been taking some leisurely weekends. Is this, taking the advice of your doctor, as much of a vacation as you're going to—

*The President.* Well, I think probably yes. I don't think we're going to be able to get

a 2-week vacation, nor do I feel need of that, although I was delighted when the doctor recommended it. Took a little pressure off so we could get a good long weekend. But I feel good. I think the health is strong. This weekend was good, and I got a lot of rest up there.

So, I think that I'm more apt to do that than I am to try to get a week off in a row, something like that.

#### *Legislative Agenda*

*Q.* Are you anxious to return to full-fledged campaigning?

*The President.* Not particularly. Full-term governing, trying to move this Congress to do things that I've been trying to get done. For example, an education program that will change education and change it for the better; an anticrime bill that will give support to the people in the cities, the people in the rural areas that need it. So there's a lot of things we're still trying to get done with Congress. This period gives me time to concentrate on that. I'll keep going.

I'd like to see this legislation passed that will put some limits on liability. If there was ever anything people unanimously want in this country, it's to do something about the frivolous lawsuits, those that are just running up the cost of everything and frivolously driving people out of public service, out of helping their neighbor, out of medical practice. And yet it sits there in a Congress unwilling to even take it up for a vote.

So, there's plenty of things to be doing without having to concentrate on the primaries at this point or the elections at this point. And I'm trying very hard to do just exactly that.

Now, we're going to go up and see the sun come up and watch the—

*Q.* You're not even sending health financing up?

*The President.* We've got a wonderful health—

*Q.* Your health care program stands in limbo.

*The President.* Well, then blame the Congress because we've got the best health care plan there is. And it does not socialize medicine in this country. It preserves the quality of care. It gives health care access to

all, and it does it without reducing the quality of American education. And I just hope the Congress will move on it instead of sitting there and griping for the status quo.

And that's it. When I'm talking about change, that's what I'm talking about, a whole array of issues. And I think the American people understand it, and I think as the campaign gets in focus in the fall they'll understand it more clearly. So this is what it is. It isn't about who's been President for 3 years, it's the question of who has the program for change that really will help this country. And it's about time the Congress moves on some of these items. And I've listed three or four here, and there's plenty more.

So, that's what we'll be talking about. I do have a period in here where I don't have to concentrate on the primaries, and that's good. Nor will I comment on the primaries on the Democratic side. They don't need me getting in fine-tuning it. I hear what they say about me. There will be plenty of time to respond, do it in a civil way and not take questions on who's up or who's down in New York or anything like that.

Q. Well, you were kind of scared of Buchanan's threat, weren't you? Weren't you a little bit frightened about Buchanan?

*The President.* No.

#### *President's Staff*

Q. What do you think about the criticism of your Chief of Staff, Sam Skinner, and this alleged disarray?

*The President.* I think it's ridiculous. You know and I know that there's periodic stories of this nature. I've seen it in every single administration, Democrat and Republican. I discount it. I think we've got an outstanding staff. We've got good coordination between the campaign and the staff. And there's a hiatus in here, as I mentioned, where we can be sure the cooperation is the best. So it's coming along, and I don't—

Q. Is Marlin quitting?

*The President.* There's one of the most ridiculous—

*Mrs. Bush.* What?

*The President.* She said, "Is Marlin quitting?" That is so absurd. It's just absolutely absurd. And you know it. But you have to

ask the question because somebody beat you to a story that's untrue. [*Laughter*] So you have to ask it, but it's silly. It's silly.

Q. The best defense is offense. I could campaign—

*The President.* Exactly. You're darn right you can.

*Mrs. Bush.* You can't see in our bedroom window; that's good news.

*The President.* You can see George sleeping over there. See, on the far right window. That's my son George; that's our son George's room. And when he got the word that the Texas Rangers won 4 to nothing at 5:45 a.m., he went back to sleep for another hour and refused to come out to see the cherry blossoms. That's my boy for you.

Q. A chip off the old block. [*Laughter*]

#### *President's Opening Day Pitch*

*The President.* Yes, rooting for his ball team. There's a beautiful view there. And I've gotten so many compliments on that first pitch, I'm surprised you don't ask about that. A lot of people—I thought there would be some criticism. They could visualize the left-handed hitter standing there and the pitcher on the first pitch saying, outside and away, do not bring it in over the strike zone, and bring it in a little slower than normal because he's looking for the heat. And so, as one reporter pointed out, you give him the chill or the freeze.

And it was wonderful because it was a great comparison with my grandson who had to get out there and arrogantly throw it right over the middle of the plate fast. So, I've been surprised at the reaction from the people. It's very understanding on that pitch.

Q. That's why you want to run for reelection, so you can throw out the first ball, right?

*The President.* Well, I think the American people seem to be sensitive. They see what the man is trying to do, keep it outside on the opening left-handed hitter. [*Laughter*] You notice how the third baseman came in on the very first pitch of the leadoff hitter. He was in for the bunt. Now, with my pitch, nobody could have bunted that thing. [*Laughter*]

Q. You're the ultimate outsider.

*Tidal Basin Visit*

*The President.* I think we can go without fouling up the traffic there.

Q. Breakfast in the mess. We do know a good bagel factory.

Q. How's the Kennebunkport house?

*Mrs. Bush.* We're going to see in a couple of weeks.

Q. Habitable?

*Mrs. Bush.* Yes, we'll be up there Easter. No furniture, though.

*The President.* Valdez [David Valdez, President's Photographer], can you create a original "Valdez" out of this? A man of your ability ought to be able to make a real creation. I'll send this to my mother. This "Valdez" will live in history.

Q. Are these the campaign photos?

*The President.* No.

*Mrs. Bush.* Oh, you bet. [Laughter]

*The President.* This is an annual event for us. It's very nice.

*Mrs. Bush.* Next year we're going to go at 5 a.m.

Q. How long have you been doing this?

*The President.* Maybe three, I don't remember exactly.

Q. Not as Vice President?

*The President.* Well, we didn't have to worry about you in the daytime then. [Laughter] This is pretty.

*Mrs. Bush.* Beautiful.

Q. You're not saying that Vice President Quayle has an easier life than you?

*The President.* No. I'm just saying it's a little different between what you can do as President and what you can do as Vice President.

*Term Limitations*

Q. If you're so much for term limitations, why don't you seek one term?

*The President.* Because we're limited to two terms. I think that's about right for a President. I didn't always feel that way either.

Q. Really? What caused your conversion?

*The President.* I think that's the kind of change that Thomas Jefferson is talking about. That's what caused it.

Q. I didn't read the same thing in his words. [Laughter]

*The President.* I did. Let's go. I think we better head on back before the traffic starts hitting the bridge.

*Tidal Basin Visit*

Q. Walk. We have to run.

*The President.* No, you're right here.

Here, Ranger, get in. They want you, I know. I know everyone wants you in the picture.

*Mrs. Bush.* Sit down, Millie.

*The President.* Big guys in the middle. Here, Ranger; here, boy. Sit, sit. Good boy. Stay, stay.

Q. What perks are you giving up, Mr. President?

*The President.* He's like Helen Thomas. You tell him to do something, he doesn't write it—[inaudible].

Thank you all very much.

Q. Giving up any perks?

*The President.* Ranger, come here, boy. Sic her! [Laughter]

Q. That's all right. Ranger's okay.

Q. Any comment on the GAO report, Mr. President?

*The President.* Randall [Randall Pinkston, CBS News], nice to see you there.

You've got to admit the timing was perfect on this, right? It's so beautiful. It really is.

Q. Did you know it was going to be a perfect day?

*The President.* Well, we talked about either today or tomorrow. Here's the way the decisionmaking process works: Barbara got home at about 11 p.m., so I made the command decision to go either this morning or tomorrow morning. So we went this morning.

Q. The later the better.

*The President.* No, we wanted to do it so we wouldn't foul up traffic. But it's great to do. I thought she might be a little tired, but she wasn't, so off we go. We wake up at 5 a.m. every morning. Got that? It's true.

Q. I believe it.

*The President.* It's true. So it's routine. Good to see you all. Got to go to work.

*Note: The exchange began at 5:55 a.m. during a walk from the White House to the Jefferson Memorial and back. In his re-*

marks, the President referred to Ross Perot, businessman and prospective Presidential candidate.

## Remarks Congratulating United States Olympic Athletes April 8, 1992

Well, please be seated. Mr. Vice President and Marilyn—I've been jealous of them ever since they got to go to see a little bit of Albertville, not as much as they would have liked, but we were just delighted they could represent our country, albeit briefly, at this marvelous event.

And may I salute an old friend, Bill Hybl, from Colorado, who is the president of the U.S. Olympic Committee and who stepped into a difficult job and has done a superb job for our athletes and for our country. I see next to him Oss Day, who was also on our delegation that represented us over there. Welcome, sir. And may I just salute all that are here today, fellow Americans, and most of all, the very special athletes who did our country so proud. And a special hello to another athlete in his own right, a former coach of Notre Dame's Fighting Irish, who has just come, as Dizzy Dean would say, from "commemertating" on the NCAA basketball tournament, Digger Phelps.

Now, a parenthetical note and one of great importance and, I think, benefit to our country. Today we're announcing that Digger Phelps will be a Special Assistant to the Director at the Office of National Drug Control Policy. Next to Digger is Governor Bob Martinez, who is doing a superb job heading up that Office. And now, Digger will be at his side, the side of the Attorney General Bill Barr. And he's joining our efforts to take back the streets from crime and drugs, working on our new "Weed and Seed" program, which is terribly important to every community in our country. Digger, welcome, officially, and please stand up.

Well, I'm so glad to see all of you here helping salute the Olympians. And let me say that it's an honor to have this team here, though I almost didn't recognize you all without the interruptions for commercials.

[Laughter]

The Olympics—sorry about that one—[laughter]—the Olympics have been described as "going for the gold." Well, whether you took home a gold, silver, bronze, or simply just gave it your best, in my book and the book of your countrymen, you're all winners, indeed, heroes. And I think that's true for all Americans, look at it that way.

A book once proclaimed, "Let us now praise famous men." The 1992 Winter Olympics praised famous women. And did they do it well? I speak of champions like Kristi Yamaguchi over here, of Fremont, California. And I know Kristi's got her own cereal now, but we know she's the real Special K. [Laughter]

With us today, of course, is a champion whose specialty is speed skating. Bonnie Blair was supported in her early days by her hometown Champaign, Illinois, fire department. Now, after becoming the first American woman to take a gold medal in two straight Olympics, she's set the speed skating world on fire. Congratulations.

So did Cathy, Cathy Turner of Rochester, whose story even Ripley would disbelieve. A briefly retired speed skater, Cathy gave up her job as a nightclub singer to return to her sport and win the gold in short track, a silver in the relay event. And I congratulate her. Well done, well done. That brings me to other members of what's been called the Golden Girls, people like Donna Weinbrecht of New Milford, New Jersey, winning the first-ever gold medal in moguls skiing, or Juneau's Hilary Lindh, winning the silver in the women's downhill, the first Alaskan athlete to win an Olympic medal. Hilary, you've made Alaska almost forget about the Iditarod. Where are you?

I think, too, of Diann Roffe, Nancy Kerrigan, Amy Peterson, Darcie Dohnal, and